

ANNUAL DISCOURSE,

13

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

OHIO

HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL

SOCIETY,

AT COLUMBUS,

On the 23d of December, 1837.

BY TIMOTHY WALKER.

CINCINNATI:

PUBLISHED BY A. FLASH.

1838.

81

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

ANNUAL DISCOURSE.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN:

I have been induced to accept the invitation to deliver the Annual Discourse before your learned body, chiefly from the consideration, that howmuchsoever I may fall short of what the place and the occasion require, I shall at least have an opportunity of evincing my high appreciation of the honor of being your organ, and my ardent desire to contribute something, little though it be, towards promoting the exalted objects of your association.

These objects are comprehensively summed up in the two potent words, HISTORY and PHILOSOPHY. How vast the separate import of each, and how mighty their combined effect! Contemplate history alone, and what terms can adequately express its importance? If, with all the lights now reflected from experience, human existence be still in many respects a profound enigma, what would it not have been, with all these lights extinguished? Imagine, for a moment, all record of past events obliterated. Retain all other books and monuments, but let those of history be erased, expunged, annihilated—and then look around you. You see the fleeting present; you dimly guess, perhaps, at the doubtful future; but the PAST—the fixed, the mighty, the instructive past—what is it? All blank oblivion. Behind you stretches a dark, unknown, interminable gulf, which utterly severs you from the elder world. Across its still and sullen waters there comes no welcome voice, to greet you as brethren of the great human family which has passed away. All is dead silence, deep as of the grave. You know not who have lived before your time, nor what has been their fate. The chords of universal sympathy are shortened to a point. Your puny race commences with your own generation; and the precious memories of sixty centuries are lost to you forever. This great abstract idea has been clothed with a form which speaks forcibly to the eye. TIME has been represented as a gigantic, inexorable being, furnished with wings, and armed with a scythe: the one denoting his ceaseless flight, the other that he cuts down all before him. And such,

in truth, would be his all devastating career, were it not for **HISTORRY**, which has likewise been embodied; and here you behold a still more powerful and majestic being, who grapples fearlessly with the giant Time, and wrests from his grasp the destroying scythe.

But barely to perpetuate the remembrance of facts, is not the highest office of history. It also records the ultimate judgments of mankind upon the actions of mankind. It is the stern arbiter of all earthly reputation, from whose award there lies no appeal. With a severely just and impartial pen, it writes, for all who move in an elevated sphere, the irreversible sentence of glory or infamy. And who can measure the influence which it thus exercises over the conduct of those who aspire to its cognizance? To men who are truly great, and conscious of having greatly deserved, but who, in the prosecution of their lofty enterprizes, have encountered unmerited opposition and abuse from contemporaries, who could not or would not appreciate them, the assurance of an ultimate vindication by the historian must be indescribably precious. That virtue would be almost superhuman, which, without this confidence, could sustain its possessor through a life of magnanimous opposition to presumptuous ignorance or vulgar prejudice. To persist strenuously in a high minded course, at the certain sacrifice of even temporary popularity, requires no small degree of resolution. But where is the heroism that would not cower at the thought of remaining always unjustified—a permanent blot on the fair page of history? Could the **DISCOVERER** of this hemisphere, for example—the most deserving, and yet most injured, among the sons of men—could he have persevered through every form of peril, difficulty, and discouragement, which could possibly be crowded into his protracted life—maintaining his sublime enthusiasm and irrepressible energy through all reverses—desponding not when he saw the faithlessness of the great conspiring with the envy of the little, to rob him at once of fortune and of glory—could he, without once faltering, have gone through this, if high historic faith had not sustained him—if, through the breaking clouds which lowered around him, he had not caught some glimpses of that triumphant justification, that full and glorious measure of renown, laid up for him in after times? And, on the other hand, the **NEROS** and **CALIGULAS**, who have trampled on mankind—would they not have cumbered the earth more frequently, but for the historic retribution which awaits such characters? If they ever venture to look forward, must they not shrink from the doom of immortal infamy? Even when no laws, human or divine, are sufficient to check their insane passions, can they yet anticipate, without dismay, the world's everlasting abhorrence?—If so, it is because, with nothing left to hope, there can be nothing to dread. But at all events, they bequeath their lives for a lesson to posterity; and thus the veriest scourges of our race are made

subservient to good, when they have ceased to be instruments of evil. In the long lapse of ages, who shall say that the fearful warning of their examples, emblazoned on the deathless pages of history, may not save the world from more and greater crimes, than the brief measure of existence allowed them to perpetrate? Who shall say that Europe, for example, has not received a lesson from that wonderful man, who lately wielded her destinies with such resistless sway, which shall operate powerfully for her freedom and repose, when the millions who fell to pave his pathway, shall all be forgotten?

“Thanks for that lesson—it shall teach
To after warriors more,
Than high Philosophy could preach,
And vainly preached before.”

But history can scarcely be contemplated apart from philosophy; because that wisdom which is learned from experience, is the best and highest wisdom; and in this view, history and philosophy walk hand in hand. An ancient sage has beautifully illustrated this idea, by saying that “history is philosophy teaching by example.” Judiciously then have you combined the two, as the high objects of your association. And surely never, in the annals of time, has philosophy instructed mankind by more useful examples, than the history of Ohio, if worthily written, would record for the admiration of the world. I speak not now of those warlike examples, which form so large a part of the teaching of the past—although Ohio too has had her heroic age. But I speak of those wonderful examples of peaceful progress, which have never been equalled on the face of the globe. Few comparatively as our years have been, we have more than realized the common growth of centuries. The wondrous fable of the dragon’s teeth is scarcely more miraculous than the increase of our population.

That I am not indulging in exaggeration, a few familiar dates will prove. On the 13th of July, 1787, the congress of the confederation adopted the celebrated ordinance, which prepared this then wilderness for social existence, by throwing around it the first protection of law. This then is the era, from which our history commences. On the 7th of April, 1788, CUTLER and his fellow pioneers from New England, arrived at Marietta, and there began the first settlement of Ohio. On the 29th of November, 1802, the convention, at Chillicothe, signed that constitution, which made Ohio a member of the Union, with a population of perhaps fifty thousand. In 1830 the census gave Ohio but a fraction less than a *million* of inhabitants. And now, at the end of fifty years from the adoption of the ordinance; forty-nine from the first settlement of the state; and thirty-five from her admission into the Union; we are assembled

Here, in the Capitol of one of the largest states in the confederacy, to lay offerings upon the shrine of our history and philosophy!

When Burke, in his great speech on conciliation with America, desired to illustrate, in the strongest possible manner, the future importance of the colonies to England, if they could be retained as such—he seized upon the striking fact, that their growth had chiefly taken place within the short period of the life of man; and then, in one of the most splendid efforts of his unrivalled eloquence, he imagined the angel of his aged friend, Lord Bathurst, seventy years before, in predicting to that nobleman, in his youth, the rising glories of England, to have pointed to America—"then a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest; a small seminal principle, rather than a formed body"—and to have said to him—"Young man, there is America, which at this day serves little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men, and uncouth manners; yet shall before you taste of death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce, which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to, by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilizing conquests and civilizing settlements, in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America, in the course of a single life!"

NATHAN DANE, the author of the ordinance before referred to, is now no more. He died on the 15th of February, 1835, in the eighty-third year of his age, and full of honors as of years. He framed that ordinance for four hundred thousand square miles of unpeopled solitude. He lived to see its broad shield cover more than two millions of civilized men, surrounded by all the substantial elements of happiness! That it would have required an angel's prescience for him to have foretold this, in 1787, who can doubt? Yet it did take place in a little more than one half of the period of his life! If then our colonial growth, in seventy years, was sufficiently astounding, to justify the bold figure of an angel lifting the veil from the future, by what startling imagery would Burke have portrayed our growth in fifty years? I venture to say that nothing less than a voice direct from the Almighty throne, could have created belief in a prophecy of what we have witnessed. If the first adventurers, in order to induce the youth of New England to join their expedition, had predicted any thing like the truth, they would have been treated as madmen! Yes, as madmen! In fact we know that they were so regarded, by many of their contemporaries, although their wildest dreams of expectation did not approach the amazing reality which surrounds us. Nor can we wonder at this; for anticipations of the future must have some foundation in the experience of the past; and history could furnish no such foundation in this case. If even now—with all the glorious evidences before

and around us—when our surface is spangled all over with cultivated farms, neat villages, and bustling cities—when our lakes, our rivers, our canals, and our roads, are all crowded with vehicles of commerce, deep freighted with the products of our various industry,—if we who see all this, can scarcely take in the idea, that many a living man remembers the day, when all this smiling region was one vast, unbroken, frowning forest—how could it have dawned upon the most far reaching mind, when the waggon of the first immigrants was seen slowly lumbering towards the West, that it contained the founders of a state like this? But I strive in vain for adequate terms to describe the contrast. What would elsewhere have the appearance of daring hyperbole, is here so far within the truth, as to sound tame and feeble to those who have seen what is attempted to be described.

And yet the hireling writers of the old world, having no such recent progress to boast of, recur for superiority to their transmitted glories, and taunt us with our want of antiquity! We do indeed lack their antiquity. But as an offset for this, even we, among the newest people of this new world, can show the materials for a history—the stupendous facts—which, in the eye of sound philosophy or enlightened philanthropy, will cast the proudest annals of Europe deep into the shade. In the bloody narratives of all-desolating war—in the harrowing disclosures of remorseless tyranny trampling human rights in the dust—we acknowledge their superiority, and let them make the most of it. But in the peaceful progress of unshackled enterprize—in the rapid promotion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, with the smallest outward means—in the manifestation of those blessed energies which convert a wilderness into a paradise—we challenge all time to produce one parallel to our history.

True, this history is not yet written. Some valuable sketches have indeed been furnished; but no where can the enquirer find a full and authentic history of Ohio. This is certainly a subject of regret, but, under the circumstances, not of surprise or shame. It is deeply to be regretted, because the sources of information are daily drying up. The eye-witnesses of our earliest events are fast disappearing. The memory of every pioneer is a rich magazine of unwritten history, of which time is rapidly robbing us. One after another, the aged fathers of Ohio are sinking into the tomb, and with them perish their unpublished memoirs. Gladly would they have told their adventures; but that they should have written them, was not to be expected. To write narratives is the province of leisure, as well as learning; and the subduers of a wilderness had enough else to think of. But the excuse, which is ample for them, will not always avail their successors. The time has arrived when we ought to take shame to ourselves, if we do not rescue from ob-

livion, these precious but fleeting recollections. We should regard this, not merely as a matter of laudable pride, but of imperious duty. We owe it to the world, as well as to ourselves, to contribute our proportion to the great aggregate of written experience. That we acknowledge this debt, is evinced by the bare existence of this association. The leading object we propose to ourselves is to collect and preserve the scattered and decaying materials of our history. But as yet, like too many debtors, we have rested in promises only. Let the confession, however humiliating, be candidly made—we ought to have done much more than we have; and now is the proper time to pledge ourselves to more exertion. We have this year closed our first half century; and it forms a convenient period for the first division of the history of Ohio.

I do not propose, in this discourse, to enter into historical details, because they would be unsuited to the occasion. But recurring to the idea before quoted—that history is philosophy teaching by example—and remembering that examples may be held up, as well for warning as imitation; I propose to glance at some of the more prominent facts in our history, offering such comments as truth may seem to warrant. That there must be much to admire is certain; that there will be something to censure, may be set down as equally certain. I shall speak with entire freedom, in either view; and rely upon your justice for a candid construction. The review will embrace some of the leading causes which have promoted or retarded our march, to the present time; and lest I may not be so fortunate as to awaken your interest, allow me, in advance, to bespeak your patience.

The first cause of our wonderful progress is undoubtedly to be found in the character and position of our soil. Possessing a fertility which cannot be surpassed; and being bounded by a broad lake on one side, and a noble river on the other, so as to furnish every facility for commerce and manufactures, as well as agriculture; the very first observer must have seen that twenty-five millions of acres of such land, so situated, could support at least five millions of people, without tasking its natural energies to any thing like the extent witnessed in the more crowded portions of Europe. And if to these considerations, we add a mild and healthy climate, equally removed from the severe cold of the north, and the intense heat of the south; together with the fact that our south west corner touches very nearly, if not quite, the geographical centre of the Union; we shall find, in the character and position of our soil, every inducement which a settler could desire. He must have been perfectly sure that Ohio would become an important state, because nature, in characters not to be mistaken, had stamped this destiny upon her very face.

And if the settler turned from the contemplation of the soil, to the first fundamental law by which his rights would be determined, the inducement was multiplied ten fold. He saw, in the Ordinance of 1787, a solemn compact, made in advance, between the original states and the people and future states in this territory, which was forever to remain unalterable, unless by common consent, and which fixed and established the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty, as the basis of all laws, constitutions, and governments, to be formed therein through all coming time. Upon the surpassing excellence of this ordinance, no language of panegyric would be extravagant. The Romans would have imagined some divine Egeria for its author. It approaches as nearly to absolute perfection, as any thing to be found in the legislation of mankind; for after the experience of fifty years, it would perhaps be impossible to alter without marring it. In short, it is one of those matchless specimens of sagacious forecast, which even the reckless spirit of innovation would not venture to assail. My limits will not allow me to dilate upon its provisions; but suffice it to say, that besides embodying all the great principles of right which had then been tried, it strengthened the very outposts of freedom, by enumerating several never before declared. It made the promotion of education a sacred duty of government, secured existing contracts against retro-active legislation, prevented the lingering remnants of feudality from taking root in our soil, guarantied the utmost good faith towards the Indians, and barred the territory forever against slaves. The immigrant therefore knew beforehand, that this was a land of the highest political as well as natural promise; and under the auspices of another Moses, he journeyed with confidence towards his new Canaan.

In the next place, the peculiar condition of our country, at this epoch, made a new field of enterprise especially desirable. The armies of the revolution had recently been disbanded; and the surviving soldiers had spent all but their blood, in achieving our independence. However rich they went into the contest, they came out poor. Whither then were they to go, to retrieve their ruined fortunes? Not to commerce, for commerce was then prostrate. Not to manufactures, for they were not yet established. Agriculture therefore was their only resource; and this wild region was the very place to begin life anew. Here no stock in trade was required, but the musket and the axe; and log cabins would be palaces to those who had slept so long in camps. Thus the necessities of a country exhausted by war, caused the West, though a wilderness, to be regarded as an asylum.

Again, it was an important consideration, that this whole territory belonged to the vast public domain, then recently acquired by cessions from the several states. I am at a loss for words to express the emotions excited by this sublime preliminary to the commence-

ment of our history. Contrasted with the common selfishness of human actions, how can we sufficiently admire the entire self-forgetfulness in which this concession originated? A concession, which for high souled patriotism and magnanimity, has no parallel in the history of any people. A concession, without which our precious Union could not have been formed. A concession by which thirteen rival states, immersed in debt, and distracted by vast conflicting claims to vacant territory, with one generous accord put an end to growing strife, by throwing the whole into a great public fund, for the equal benefit of all. Search through the records of national discord, and point me to a single instance of a termination like this—where a public domain, out of which mighty empires might have been carved by a conqueror's sword, instead of being brought to the customary arbitrament of war, was made a grand peace-offering on the altar of concord! Well may we glory in this first great fact in our history, when we cannot even trace back the title to our land without being reminded of the sacrifice made for the Union. But the first settler saw in it something more than a sublime moral spectacle. He justly laid much stress upon the fact that the entire soil, in which he was to acquire an interest, belonged to a single wise and powerful proprietor, who would of course adopt the most liberal policy in disposing of it. He foresaw that he should have, in the federal government, an able and willing coadjutor in whatsoever might promise to advance the general improvement of the country. And how abundantly has this expectation been realized? not only has the price per acre been fixed as low as sound judgment would permit; not only has the admirable scheme of survey and sale afforded the utmost security for good titles; not only were purchasers from congress exempted from taxation for five years from the time of purchase; but with a generosity only equalled by that which gave these lands to the Union, congress have, in their turn, actually given away, for various benevolent objects, about one fifth of the entire surface of Ohio. At first religion, as the highest interest of man, came in for its share in these appropriations. But a most prudent determination to keep church and state as distinct as possible, to avoid encouraging sectarian strife, and to close the door forever against religious importunity or favoritism, soon induced congress to leave religion to its own abundant resources in the human heart, and to confine their donations chiefly to the purposes of education and internal improvements. To education, besides several specific grants, one thirty-sixth part of our soil has been forever consecrated; and thus it is hardly a metaphor, to say that the tree of knowledge was the first exotic planted in our Eden.—To internal improvements the successive donations have been much greater; and thus our physical and intellectual welfare have been alike promoted. That all this was foreseen by the first adventurers,

is not probable; for in that case, the country would have been filled up at once, as by a deluge of immigration. But that high anticipations of the enlightened liberality of congress, formed a strong inducement to the first settlers, cannot be doubted; and the result has more than equalled their most sanguine expectations. Indeed, whether we look to the acquisition or the disposition of the public domain, we find, in either view, enough to call forth our most hearty congratulations.

Such, briefly, were some of the leading inducements to immigration, held out by Ohio while yet a wilderness. But this is only the foreground of the picture. Behind were clustered dark images of loneliness, and hardship, and peril, which served to test the daring spirit of the pioneers, and give their enterprize a character for dauntless heroism. These immense forests were thronged with savages, who claimed to hold them by the right of immemorial occupancy, and were sternly resolved to defend them against the white intruder. Even now some remnants of these once powerful tribes still linger within our borders; but they are subdued, degraded, broken hearted; and we only see in them the shattered ruins of former prowess—no longer objects of fear, but rather of pity and regret;—and in the perfect security which we now enjoy, it is scarcely possible to form an adequate idea of the condition of the first settlers, every moment exposed to these remorseless enemies, and far removed from all hope of human aid. In the beautiful language applied to the first settlers of New England,

“There were men with hoary hair,
Amidst that Pilgrim band—
Why had they come to wither there
Away from their childhood’s land?”

“There was woman’s fearless eye,
Lit by her deep love’s truth;
There was manhood’s brow serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth.”

They had not indeed been driven to seek “a faith’s pure shrine;” but they had come voluntarily to seek a home—a new, wild, forest home—not such a home as they have left to us; but lacking every thing which we enjoy, and environed with terrors of which we do not dream. When I look back upon their scanty groups, at the few and remote *stations*, which then dotted the forest, after making every allowance for unflinching resolution and sleepless vigilance, I cannot help regarding their escape from utter extermination, as little short of miraculous; and it seems to me to have required more real hardihood to do what they did, than to have stood with Leonidas at the pass of Thermopylæ. There may, indeed, have been a time, when the Indians were disposed to greet the white race as celestial visitants. This is indicated by all their first interviews

with Europeans, unless where rumors of treachery had warned them to beware. And in contemplating the hapless fate of these children of the wild, it adds unmeasurably to our regret, to think how differently this gentle, confiding, child-like disposition, if it existed, might have been managed. But at the time of which I now speak, this original sweetness of temper had been turned into the bitterest gaul. I can find no language strong enough to describe the ferocious malignity with which the Indians now regarded their constantly encroaching competitors for the soil of their fathers. They felt that the crisis of their fate was near. If the whites obtained a foot-hold west of the Alleghanies, they would not stop short of the Pacific. Waging, therefore, a war of desperation, they made it one of extermination; neither asking nor giving quarter. I would not, if I could, narrate the fearful horrors of our first seven years, during which, this was indeed, "*the dark and bloody ground.*" But the sun of peace at length arose, upon this dreary night of storm and danger. After Harmar and St. Clair had been successively defeated, and the carnage-fed hopes of the Indians were at the highest, they received a death blow in the victory of Wayne; and on the 3d of August, 1795, panic-struck and despairing, they signed the Greenville Treaty, from which we date our peaceful progress. Once only since that defeat, so auspicious to us, but disastrous to them, has a transient hope of regaining their lost ascendancy been kindled by the daring and comprehensive genius of Tecumseh, co-operating, in the end, with British hostility. Thus was this region, again, for three years preceding 1814, the theatre of savage warfare; making in all ten years, or one fifth of the period of our history. But the victories of Harrison and his brave compeers, then settled the fate of the Indians forever. Their vindictive spirit may still remain, but the power to make it widely terrible can never return. To all human appearance, their ultimate destiny is utter extermination. Who are to answer for this, before the God of nations, I hardly dare to think. Whether the pledge in our Ordinance, "of the utmost good faith towards them," has been fully kept, I will not here enquire. Their hostility to our fathers was at least natural; and I have dwelt upon it, as adding another wonder to our history. To have commenced a settlement in the midst of such foes, and to have sustained it through such an infancy, is proof conclusive, if proof were wanted, that the first immigrants brought with them, and here practised, all the stern and lofty virtues of our nature. The West at once became a school for heroism. The magnitude of the dangers to be encountered, was of itself a lure to the adventurous spirits on the Atlantic shore; and thus the very difficulty of settlement has redoubled its glory.

We have now seen what the first immigrants had to hope, and what to fear. But after the pacification of Fort Greenville, all

discouragements were removed, and the tide of immigration rushed westward in torrents. In the eastern states, the most extravagant reports were circulated of Ohio fertility. The soil was said to be endowed with a self-generating power, which required no seed. Men were to reap abundantly without ploughing or sowing, and all was to be ease and plenty. I can well remember when, in Massachusetts, the rage for moving to Ohio was so great, that resort was had to counteracting fictions, in order to discourage it; and this region was represented as cold, sterile, sickly, and full of all sorts of monsters. Nor was this all. The powerful engine of caricature was set in motion. I have a distinct recollection of a picture, which I saw in boyhood, prefixed to a penny, *anti-moving-to-Ohio pamphlet*, in which a stout, ruddy, well dressed man, on a sleek, fat horse, with a label "*I am going to Ohio*," meets a pale, and ghastly skeleton of a man, scarcely half dressed, on the wreck of what was once a horse, already bespoken by the more politic crows, with a label, "*I have been to Ohio*." But neither falsehood nor ridicule could deter the enterprising from seeking a new home. Hither they came in crowds. They did not indeed bring affluence with them, but they brought the bold heart and strong hand, which are infinitely better, to reclaim a wilderness. It may be laid down as an *a priori* truth, that a population made up of immigrants, will contain the hardy and vigorous elements of character, in a far greater proportion, than the same number of persons, born upon the soil, brought up at home, and accustomed to tread in the footsteps of their fathers. As a general rule, it is only the more resolute and energetic class of spirits, that can nerve themselves to the effort required for severing the numberless, local, social, and family ties, which bind men to their birth-place. And then, upon arriving in a new country, the very necessity of their condition compels them to think, act, and even originate for themselves. There are no familiar customs, which require only the passive acquiescence of habit. There are no alliances of family or neighborhood, in which one leans upon another, and each helps all. On the contrary, immigrants meet as strangers, unknowing and unknown, and must depend upon their own resources. Like soldiers of fortune, who, staking all upon the sword, have thrown away the scabbard, they know that they must either "do or die." Every thing around them cherishes that intense feeling of individuality and self-confidence, which always makes a strong, if not a polished character. And such pre-eminently was the character of the early settlers,—bold, free, resolute, self-dependent,—the very character to lay deep and strong the foundations of a state.

Much also may be justly ascribed to the section of our country, from which so large a number of the first immigrants came—I mean the New England States. Far be it from me to harbor or

encourage the narrow sentiment of sectional pride. If men behave themselves as men, I care not from what quarter of the globe, much less, from what quarter of the United States they come. Never would I draw lines among the stars of our banner, to divide them off into separate constellations. But the same feeling which would hinder me from depreciating any portion of our own countrymen, would impel me to vindicate them, if unjustly aspersed. And is not this the fact with regard to the people of New England? Because in Europe, all Americans are sneered at as *Yankees*, until the term has become one of reproach; and because, for some reason, which I am not antiquarian enough to understand, Americans have chosen to restrict this appellation to the people of New England, its foreign obloquy has become native only there: and thus, through an unpatriotic imitation of foreign slang, they have been proverbially damned by a cant expression. I know no other reason for this unfounded prejudice, unless it be, that the whole race have been judged of by a few strolling specimens, in the shape of pedlars and swindlers, who early roamed abroad, because they could not stay at home; and, like the subtraction of negative quantities, increased the value of what they left behind. But all states contain such characters; and it would seem to be to the honor of any people, to spurn them from their bosom. If, therefore, New England has suffered in the opinion of her sister states, because they may have been molested by some of her recreant sons, for whom her own atmosphere was uncongenial, she must solace herself with this consideration. But the truth is, that the world has never seen a more honest, industrious, frugal, intelligent, orderly, and generous people, than the aggregate population of New England. Stigmatize them by what name you please, this, all who have been among them, know; and strangers would know it too, if they would but weigh the evidence; for without the possession of all these qualities in the highest degree, how could that enterprising people have flourished as they have, and accomplished what they have, on their comparatively bleak and barren soil? But why attempt to eulogize a people, whose whole history is one continued strain of eulogy? I count it, therefore, among the eminently favorable circumstances attending the first settlement of Ohio, that so large a proportion of the early inhabitants were of the substantial yeomanry of New England. With their energies and this soil, they could not but thrive rapidly; and the customs, opinions, and tastes, in which they had been reared, have been proved to constitute the choicest elements of social organization.

If, however, any should be inclined to dispute the fact, that New England influence did preponderate, in the early settlement of Ohio, I shall not labor to prove it; for I am sure we shall all agree that this influence, whatever may have been its local origin, was a good influence; since bad seed could not have produced the blessed fruits

which we are now enjoying. And, in fact, no particular sectional influence was long very perceptible here; for as the stream of immigration flowed onward, it received accessions from every quarter. Not only all the then existing States of the Confederacy, but nearly all the nations of the earth, have contributed to form the Ohio character. I do not remember to have met with an Asiatic, but I could hardly name another people who are not represented here. Indeed, the most effectual steps were early taken to induce foreigners to settle among us. In the first place, congress adopted a term of probation for citizenship, which many now deem much too short. And, in the second place, our Legislature, in 1804, enacted a law, conferring on aliens the same capacity to hold land, [as citizens; and what other motives could be wanting? We offered to foreigners, upon the instant of their arrival, a solid freehold in the best and cheapest land ever put into market; and after a residence of only five years among us, they could be admitted into the honored brotherhood of American citizens. No wonder, therefore, that they took us at the word, and came in swarms from their crowded hives. Nor shall I stop to enquire, whether we have thus lost in the quality of our population, what we have gained in quantity, as some have affected to fear. The object of these measures was to multiply our numbers, and they have been abundantly successful; for we have increased in a ratio, which procreation never attained. And there are some remarks, which apply equally to all immigrants, foreign or domestic. They do not come full-handed. They come to make a livelihood, not to spend a fortune; to work with their own heads and hands, not to employ the heads and hands of others. Hence we are annoyed with very few drones or loungers, compared with other states. I doubt if a more universally working population ever existed. The proof is, that the vast aggregate capital of Ohio has been created here in a generation and a half—an astonishing result, which nothing can account for, but the fact, that every man, woman, and child has added something to the mass. And another consequence is, an all pervading sense of individual importance and self respect, the very essence of republican equality. This strikes me as one of our most marked characteristics. I know of no people who manifest so little deference for mere wealth, family, or station; and, at the same time, show so much respect for meritorious labor, in whatever sphere. Yet, in this strong feeling of equality, there is little or nothing of the leaven of agrarianism. Almost every one has acquired something already, and is striving for more; and such are pre-disposed to be satisfied with things as they are. There are only a few unprincipled demagogues, and a few of their pitiful dupes, who, on the mere question of interest, leaving justice out of view, would desire to disturb the existing rights of property. The HAVES—if I may so express it—so far outnumber

the HAVENOTS; and common sense so instinctively teaches, that, in a general scramble, the latter would come off best, from having nothing to lose, that the former could not be tempted to risk what they have in so unequal a game. In such a population, demagogueism may thrive, but agrarianism never. Where the actual equality of condition approaches so nearly to the theoretical equality of rights—where, instead of here and there an overgrown fortune, glaring out from the midst of general poverty, we see some very rich, and some very poor, but all commanding the necessities of life, and looking forward gradually to its luxuries—the levelling disposition will work upward, instead of downward. The many will strive to elevate themselves, rather than pull down the few who happen to be above them; and in this free and generous competition, the whole will press onward and upward. While, therefore, as a state, we have always been decidedly democratic, in the pure sense of this much abused word, we have never been jacobinical. The ferocious principles of the French Revolution, for example, would never have found the least favor among us, because we have had no palpable inequality, to conceal their deformity under the guise of plausibility. Aristocracy has no existence here, except in the mouths of politicians, who use it for a humbug. If, therefore, democratic skepticism demand facts, in order to create faith or strengthen hope, they may be found abundantly in our happy experience; for the world has never exhibited a fairer illustration of unmixed republicanism. If the experiment fail here, it can succeed nowhere.

But in pursuing this chain of causes and effects, our total exemption from slavery is not to be overlooked. I am aware how inflammable this topic has recently become; but I am also aware that in the noble language of our constitution, “every citizen has an indisputable right to speak, write, or print, upon any subject, as he thinks proper, being liable for the abuse of that liberty.” While, therefore, the citizens of Ohio will ever be loyal to the Union, and stand faithfully by the federal compact, in this as in all other matters; while they will never sanction the slightest interference with slavery in the states where it exists, because it is their own exclusive domestic concern; yet they will not hesitate to express their opinions respecting it, as freely and fearlessly as upon any other subject. If they regard the absolute prohibition of slavery, by the Ordinance of 1787, as ground for deep and lasting congratulation; if they think it by far the wisest and best provision of that incomparable instrument, it becomes them to say so on all proper occasions. Were the question of slavery now for the first time started, among a people who hold liberty to be the great original birthright of all mankind, I presume that throughout the millions of our American population, not one solitary voice would be raised in its favor. But when the conscript fathers of the Revolution declared to the world, “that all

men are born free and equal," slavery had already acquired the strength of a long established institution; and therefore, of necessity, that was tolerated as an existing and apparently ineradicable evil, which, under any other circumstances, would have been guarded against by all possible precautions. Accordingly, when eleven years after, these same spotless patriots were for the first time legislating for the Northwestern Territory, and the question was, whether slavery should be suffered to strike its roots into this virgin soil, they did not hesitate to pronounce their unqualified condemnation of it, as a new question, by inserting a clause of perpetual exclusion: For this they deserve, and I trust have our lasting gratitude. Not only have they caused our history to commence with a high tribute to the principles of eternal justice, but on the mere score of worldly economy, they have thus secured to us advantages which cannot be overrated. I unhesitatingly believe, that if the labor of Ohio had been performed by slaves, having no interest in its fruits, instead of freemen toiling for themselves, our population and resources would not have been the half of what they now are. There might have been larger plantations, costlier mansions, and more luxurious proprietors; but the aggregate of wealth, and strength, and comfort, would have been nothing to the present. If any doubt this, let them compare the actual condition of Ohio and Kentucky. What—I would ask in no invidious spirit—but the absence of slavery here, and its presence there, can explain the immense difference in the progress of these two neighboring states? Kentucky has as good citizens, as rich soil, as much of it, a better climate, equal natural facilities for transportation, and was settled twelve years earlier than Ohio. Yet the growth of Ohio has been all but double. Such a fact is worth a world of arguments against the economy of slavery. But as an offset for this, we have lately heard the doctrine advanced in high quarters, that slavery serves as the handmaid of liberty: None, we are told, are so truly free, as they who have nothing to do but command their slaves; and none so truly appreciate their liberty, as they who have the contrast of slavery always before their eyes. Such language would sound well in the mouth of a despot, but it falls with an ill grace from the lips of a professed republican. The truth is, that leaving the slaves themselves out of the question, all the tendencies of slavery are anti-republican, even as respects the free; insomuch that a tolerably accurate idea of the landed aristocracies of Europe, may be gathered from our agricultural districts, composed of immense plantations cultivated by slaves, where the few subsist in ease and splendor, on the labors of the many. But I will not pursue this train of thought. The paradox, which makes slavery ancillary to liberty, is too glaring to do harm. The free laborers of Ohio, toiling for and depending on themselves, can never be persuaded that they do not prize liberty as dearly, and

worship her as sincerely, as the wealthiest slave-holder in all the land.

It clearly results from the foregoing observations, that the people of Ohio stand conspicuously among those, to whom much has been given. Much, therefore, may be justly required of them. What, then, has Ohio done with the talents committed to her charge? It is not enough to say that her population has grown in the course of fifty years, to some thirteen hundred thousand; for human beings are not like herds, to be estimated by the head. We demand something more than that they should have multiplied rapidly. If the census were to be the criterion of a state, we might, perhaps, be compelled to yield the palm to the Chinese. The question is not, how many inhabitants have we to the square mile, but what have we done to merit praise or censure?

To answer this question fully, would be to write the entire history of Ohio. I can barely touch upon some leading facts; but first indulge me in a preliminary remark. When European writers speak of this country, they almost universally omit to make allowance for our comparative infancy. They take their own civilization for the standard by which to measure ours, and then gravely censure the Americans, because they have not reached, in two centuries, what Europeans have been growing to in twenty. This is as unreasonable as to require in a child the maturity of a man. The just course would be to speak of the child, as a child; and if he has done well for his age, to give him the full credit of it. A similar mistake is likely to be committed, in comparing Ohio with her elder sisters. We claim in the outset, that our youthfulness be considered. We demand to be judged of as a recent people; who, as in duty bound, have attended to the plain comforts of life, before thinking of its adornments. We do not undervalue "those polished arts which humanize mankind." On the contrary, we are just beginning to cultivate them, because we are just beginning to feel our ability to do so, with a due regard to prudence. The extreme poverty of our early days is past, and we can now safely spare something for the more refined embellishments and charities of social life. Still we do not profess to equal, in this respect, some of the older and more affluent states. To return, then, to the question, what has Ohio done?

In the first place, I answer that the people of Ohio have cleared the dense forest from some ten millions of acres, reclaimed the soil from the dominion of nature, covered it with all the various garniture of civilization, and subjected it to a course of such profitable husbandry as to supply a quantity of our agricultural staples, sufficient for the wants of perhaps ten times their number.

Again, at every convenient point, they have laid out and built up thriving towns, which are already beginning to look like cities; and

which deservedly attract the admiration of the traveller, not less at their neatness, than their frequency. We have not yet, and I trust we never shall have, any very large cities in this part of the country; for they will, as a matter of course, make up in number, what they want in size; and the convenience of the surrounding country will thus be far better promoted, than by a few overgrown cities remote from each other. Commerce is thus brought home to every man's door; and I regard this as one of the most interesting aspects which this region presents. It is carrying out the republican principle, even in the distribution of our population.

Again, they have connected all these places by roads, which, considering the circumstances, deserve great praise. Our soil is too rich of itself to make good roads; gravel can rarely be found for this purpose; and stone for macadamizing, often has to be brought from a great distance. Yet notwithstanding these disadvantages, the public spirit of our citizens, combined with the liberality of congress—even though that liberality has not always been improved to the best advantage—has already furnished many hundred miles of first rate macadamized road; and arrangements are making for many hundred more. I should not have adverted to this subject, but for the consideration, that the public spirit of a people is very fairly indicated by the condition of their roads; and complaints have been sometimes made of ours, by those who have not sufficiently considered the difficulties under which we labor.

But it may be said that all these things are matters of course, which there is little merit in having done, although there would be much disgrace in having neglected them. There is, however, one achievement, from the merit of which, no such deduction can be made; I mean the construction of our immense canals. That the Ohio legislature, in the twenty-third year of its existence, should have formed the bold design of uniting Lake Erie with the Ohio river, not by one canal only, which of itself would have been a vast undertaking, but by two canals, making an aggregate of six hundred miles, is a fact which speaks volumes for the enterprize of this people. That we had credit in Europe, sufficient to borrow the millions necessary, in addition to the donations of congress, to carry on these works to their approaching consummation; and that our bonds are now at as high a premium as any American stocks in the European market, are proofs that our reputation abroad, does not fall behind our own self-estimation. To say nothing, then, of other canals now in progress, of the slack water navigation created in our interior rivers, or of the many rail roads projected, some of which are already commenced if not finished; the single consideration, that we have already completed a greater amount of internal improvements than any one of the nations of Europe, and that only two of our sister states, and those the largest and among the oldest in the Union, have

done any thing near as much—this single consideration places our claim to distinction, on the score of public enterprize, beyond all cavil; and makes even boasting respectable, because well founded. If Napoleon, with the resources of a mighty empire at his single will, acquired more true glory by his road over the Simplon, than by all his victories, what meed is sufficient for still greater works, projected by the concurrence of so many wills, and executed by means of drafts drawn upon posterity? In my mind, the contemplation of such achievements excites emotions kindred to the sublime. I feel that the voice of the people is, indeed, in one exalted sense, the voice of God. And the anticipations are even more glorious than the present reality. Let a like public spirit pervade the earth, and how changed would be its aspect! In a few generations, the present inhabitants, could they revisit it, would scarcely recognize the scene of their mortal pilgrimage; so much more commodious would its whole surface be made for the residence of civilized man.

And then, look at our benevolent institutions—what encomium is equal to their merit? It is little, that we have made ample provision for our poor, for they are scarcely known among us. But we have the insane, the blind, the deaf and dumb; and yonder noble edifices attest the munificence with which we have provided for each of these unfortunate classes. Of all our public expenditures, these are unquestionably the most deserving of commendation. They honor the givers, as much as they bless the receivers. Never does human government so much resemble the divine, as when it uses power to relieve the wretched. These institutions are causing the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the maniac to reason, and all to rejoice; and how can words express a higher eulogy? I may even add our Penitentiary to the list of benevolent institutions. I never conceived the full meaning of discipline, until I saw it there. If our prisoners are not improved by our system of punishments, nothing can improve them. And as to their comfort, my only fear is, that imprisonment may come to be regarded as a boon. On themes like these, I should never tire of expatiating; but I must pass to others.

In this view of what has been done for our physical condition, I have laid no stress upon our manufactures; because, although considerable, they are not what our manufacturing resources require they should be. Our commerce can never be very great, because we nowhere touch upon any great point of foreign importation or exportation. But with our exhaustless mines of coal and iron, for the creation of steam power—of themselves a fortune to any state—in addition to the almost unlimited water power of our rivers and canals, we may increase our manufactures to any point we choose. Doubtless our agriculture alone will sustain us where we are, and will gradually increase as our vacant land becomes appropriated.

But if we are to grow in future, in any thing like the ratio of the past, it must be through manufacturing industry. To our agriculture there is a limit, in the extent of our surface. To our commerce there is also a limit, in our interior position. But to our manufactures, I can see no limit, except in the demands of the world. Nor can I doubt that as our capital accumulates, it will take this direction. It cannot be that such facilities will not be improved. For if ever a people were invited to manufacturing pursuits, by all possible natural advantages, we are that people. We might compel the iron nerves of mechanism to accomplish for us, what human muscles could never do. We might set myriads of wheels in motion, and thus make Nature herself do homage to Art. In fine, we might almost complete the triumph of mind over matter, by compelling matter to do our work, while mind expatiates among its own creations. Would you be satisfied that I do not ascribe too much to the power of mechanism, advert for a moment to what a single application of it has already done for us. Let steam be stricken from the list of prime moving forces; let machinery be stripped of that wonderful engine which now constitutes its crowning ornament, and you turn the hand more than half way backward on our dial. Taking into view the whole Mississippi valley, I deem it safe to say, that the steam engine alone is at this moment performing the work of at least one million of men, and twice that number of horses; and this, with a constitution which knows not sickness or fatigue, which never hungers or thirsts, and which bids defiance to wind and tide. I have heard that a pamphlet is yet extant, in which the probability that the western waters would one day be navigated by steam, was urged as a motive for commencing settlements here, before one had yet been made. If so, it only furnishes another instance of bold prediction more than verified. Full half of the brief period of our history had elapsed, when we first acquired this new momentum. And yet even now you cannot go where steam is not working its miracles. Time and space are, in a measure, annihilated. Uphill and downhill are no longer of consequence. Remotest points are brought into close proximity. Cities are every where springing up as if by enchantment, and every thing wears the aspect of intense activity. We seem to live at a more rapid rate than formerly. Society itself sweeps forward with a velocity unknown before.

I come then to the question, what has Ohio done for the intellectual condition of her people? The Ordinance of 1787 gave a pledge, on the subject of education, in this noble language:—"Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." This pledge is repeated in our constitution; and thus far it has been faithfully redeemed. Of our colleges,

towards the original endowment of which, congress contributed three entire townships of land, I shall only say, that, in general, all are flourishing as much as could be expected in our circumstances. But it is to our COMMON SCHOOLS, that we look with the proudest satisfaction. Congress laid their foundation in the soil itself, by consecrating one thirty-sixth part of it, forever to their support. Had this fund been judiciously managed from the beginning, it might now have amounted to perhaps three millions of dollars. But I will not complain of the loss of a few paltry dollars, when, by levying a tax for the support of schools, we can give the most conclusive evidence of the high value we attach to them. I will rather rejoice that the same year which witnessed the adoption of our plan for internal improvements, also saw the corner stone of our free-school-system laid. Had the grand idea of providing the elements of education, for every child in the state, at the public expense, originated here, we should be justified in contending for its paternity, with as much zeal as the seven cities contended for the birth place of Homer; because it is the one thing wanting to render the republican theory perfect. But the idea is not original with us. New England set the first example of taxation for general education. It was one of the earliest resolutions adopted by the pilgrim fathers. But next to the merit of setting a great example, is the merit of imitating it. This merit is ours. We have the free-school-system in actual operation; and I trust it will not be the fault of legislation, if in the next generation, born here, there be one person who cannot read and write. I have heard it suggested that the ability to read and write ought to be made the criterion of the right of suffrage; that no one should be permitted to vote, who could not write his own ballot, and read it at the polls. But however this may be, no one doubts that ignorance is the enemy which freedom has most cause to fear. It makes good slaves, but very poor citizens. Our theory of government presupposes every man to know his rights and duties, and to be capable of discharging the most important civil functions; and, therefore, the wonder is, not that some of the states should have provided means for universal elementary education, but that any should have neglected to make such provision. I may not dwell upon this momentous subject; but I do not hesitate to declare my belief that if the American Experiment shall ultimately prevail, it will owe more to the institution of free schools, than to any other single institution. Colleges and academies will enlighten a *few*; but in this country these few do not rule. It is the *many* that hold the reins of power; and these many will only be enlightened by a system of education as universal as the right of suffrage. Equality, therefore, in the means of knowledge, ought to be as much the aim of republicanism, as equality in the elective franchise; for without the former, the latter may prove a curse, in-

stead of a blessing. Who of us would not shudder at the thought of submitting all he holds dear in life to the control of a majority that could neither read nor write? Yet this is only a strong statement of the actual condition of things, where no public provision is made for education. Without adverting, therefore, to what our common schools, yet in their infancy, have already done, I would point to the law which first incorporated them into our system, as by far the most important ever enacted by our legislature. Man, the animal, was already abundantly provided for; and this law gave a cheering assurance that man, the intellectual, was not to be neglected. We have thus settled the great principle, that in Ohio, every man shall be compelled to contribute something to the enlightenment of every other man; and it only remains that we act up to this principle, in order to render the aggregate mind of Ohio, as productive as her soil. Already we boast of our physical resources; and if we go on as we have begun, we shall soon be able to make the far higher boast, that

“Man is the nobler growth our clime supplies,
 “And Souls are ripened by our northern skies.”

But speaking in this legislative hall, I am reminded that, perhaps the best indications of the character of a people are to be found in the aggregate of their legislation. If they have established a superior system of civil polity, they have given the most authentic evidence of superior wisdom, which a body politic can give. And it must be confessed, that there never has been a fairer opportunity than existed here. No hereditary rubbish was to be first cleared away; no time hallowed customs had acquired the force of law; no vested rights could be interfered with; no preconceptions encountered. Elsewhere, laws have been the gradual growth of ages. Commencing with the smallest beginnings, they have increased step by step, to meet the exigencies of society. At no time could a complete system be devised at once, without creating a civil revolution. Each new addition, therefore, must accommodate itself to that which went before; and thus the entire system, not framed upon a preconceived model, but composed by piecemeal, resembles those ancient castles, commenced in former centuries, but gradually enlarged by their successive owners, until their different parts exhibit the style of every age. But here no such obstacles existed. The dawning mind of infancy is not more open to first impressions, than was this region, to receive its first laws. The Ordinance of 1787 found it an unsullied sheet. Nothing was to be demolished, nothing repealed, nothing modified. The whole system was to be created anew from the beginning. If, therefore, we have perpetuated ancient evils or abuses, we are without excuse. If the relics of the feudal system have been planted here, there is no apology for it. But happily

this is not the fact. Our laws, as a body, are more truly and exclusively American, than those of the original states could possibly be, on account of pre-existing institutions. We have adopted the common law, it is true, but with very numerous modifications. I may not illustrate this position by a reference to particulars. I will only say, that our law of persons is pre-eminently the law of liberty, from the absence of those minute and vexatious regulations, elsewhere in force, which serve only to fetter and constrain the free action of individuals, in their private concerns; that our law of property has been so far simplified, that it can be written in perhaps one third of the space required for the corresponding department of English law; and that our law of crimes and punishments, being wholly statutory, and independent of the common law, has never been excelled in the two great qualities of simplicity and humanity. But while I claim thus much for the character of our legislation, I would be understood as referring to its general spirit and tendency, rather than to the particular excellence of all its parts; I would view it as the commencement of an improved system, rather than its completion. For while its great outlines deserve all praise, there are some striking faults, which we can afford freely to acknowledge. In the first place, we have had far too much legislation for individuals. Every volume of our statutes abounds with acts passed at the instance, and to promote the convenience of particular persons. I know not that we are worse, in this respect, than other states; but I know that the high function of legislation is degraded, when it thus stoops from the proud height which overlooks the whole, to consult the wishes of particular individuals. Again, our legislation has been far too fluctuating. To say nothing of the petty changes made every year in subordinate matters, we have had a general revision of our whole statute law, as often as once every five years. Now if the law were even considerably improved at each of these revisions, it may well be doubted whether the want of stability is not more than an offset for all such improvements. But I am unable to perceive any very decided improvement. If I take the last volume of our revised laws, I find the omissions as numerous, the phraseology as loose and careless, and the arrangement of subjects in the different acts and parts of acts, as incongruous and confused, as in the first volume. Indeed, after all that has been done, the call for a revision is probably as imperative at this moment, as it ever has been. I may be told that these are minor faults, and hardly worth scrutinizing. But I do not think so. Legislation is the only authentic medium through which the people utter their sovereign voice; and I should be sorry if the general mind of Ohio were not capable of better things. Jewels so precious as the principles of our law, certainly deserve a better casket.

And in this connexion, permit me to advert to another considera-

tion. According to the beautiful theory of our social system, it devolves upon our legislature to provide the laws necessary for our government. A stranger therefore might naturally expect to find in our statute book, a body of law sufficient for our wants. But how sadly would he be disappointed, when, upon making the examination, he should find there perhaps not one fiftieth part of the entire law which governs us; nay, not the entire law on any one single subject; but instead thereof, only here and there a straggling provision, to fill up the chinks and crevices made by time, in a system of law never enacted by any legislature! I am aware that this wide discrepancy between theory and fact, is not peculiar to Ohio; but in matters of this sort, common error does not make right. I would not be considered as one of those enthusiasts, who suppose that a perfect code of statute law can be made at once. But I know that our statutes could easily be so extended, as to embrace at least an outline of our social regulations; so that in answer to the question, what is the law of Ohio? and where can it be found?—we might refer the enquirer proudly to our statute book, for a well considered, well expressed, and well arranged system of written law. Numberless details would doubtless be omitted, for which recourse must be had, as now, to judicial discretion under the common law, until supplied by future legislative provision; but still the noble framework would be there, in its harmonious and majestic proportions; and would constitute a glorious monument of that administration, which should cause it to be reared. I can think of no other benefaction to our state so great as this. We should make the experiment under the most favorable auspices, from having so little to undo; and when achieved, all our past glories would shine dimly by the side of this. When Napoleon, “the desolator desolate,” having nothing more to hope, sought for solace in a retrospect of his wonderful life, he found it in the code he had furnished for France. “I shall go down to posterity with that code in my hand!” was his triumphant declaration. In like manner, when the historian of Ohio, after recording all her other doings, shall be able to add, that young as she was, she gave the first great example of the AMERICAN THEORY, by furnishing a systematic code of statute law, he will have set forth her highest claim to imperishable renown. This will cap the climax of her internal improvements, in the best sense of these words. And what is there to hinder so desirable a consummation? Already the ice of ancient prejudice has been broken. Already the strong holds of prescription have been undermined. Already have we innovated boldly, yet cautiously, upon the maxims of other times, because they do not suit our times and circumstances. And shall we stop midway in the grand enterprize? I trust that we shall not. I feel almost sure, that ere another half century closes upon our history, our legislation, now so meagre and imperfect, will be our proudest boast;

that we may tell him who would appreciate the general mind of Ohio, to seek it in her code; and that he who shall then stand where I now do, may congratulate the people of Ohio upon having their subordinate rights as distinctly ascertained by written laws, as their fundamental rights now are, by a written constitution. "While the vain titles of the victories of Justinian are crumbled into dust, the name of the **LEGISLATOR** is inscribed on a fair and everlasting monument!" Thus Gibbon speaks of the Roman Legislator, and thus may our historian then be able to speak of our legislators. Then sovereign law, the collected and uttered will of our people, will for the first time rise and sit enthroned, triumphant over discretionary power; and the only uncertainty respecting our rights, will be that which belongs to the imperfection of all human things. There they will stand recorded, in a luminous and comprehensive code, where all who wish may study them, and all who know, will respect and guard them.

But I may not further indulge in anticipations like these. We came here to consider, not what may be done, but what has been done—not to forestall the future, but to reckon with the past. And we have, however, imperfectly surveyed *our past*—our brief, but crowded past—crowded with facts which prophecy would not have ventured to predict—prolific in events over which patriotism may rationally exult. I commenced this retrospect with the strong assertion, that never, in the annals of time, has philosophy instructed mankind by more useful examples, than the history of Ohio holds up to the world. I trust that I have now made it good. And I would close by re-iterating it, if possible, still more emphatically. I was once asked by a citizen of a neighboring state, when speaking of our achievements, why we did not brag more? Perhaps strangers might think I have now bragged too much. But you, who hear me, know that the half has scarcely been told. I have been compelled to deal in superlatives, in order to approach the truth. For if there be one half century in the history of any people, upon which the mind may dwell, with scarcely a wish that it had been different, such I regard the first half century of our history. It does not, indeed, embrace the hallowed recollections of the Revolution; for, upon that grand drama the curtain had fallen, while Nature yet reigned here on her throne of solitude. But it does comprehend that more wonderful series of events, by which our present glorious Union was created out of the crumbling fragments of the first Confederacy. The Ordinance of 1787 was adopted two months prior to the signing of the federal constitution; and while that sacred instrument was undergoing its ordeal in the conventions of the states, the forests of Ohio were falling beneath the axe of the pioneer; so that when Washington assumed the presidential chair, his name was gratefully and reverently uttered, by his far off children

of the West. But in a still more gratifying sense, is our era, the era of the formation of the Union; since, as already seen, our very soil was the subject of a concession, without which that Union could not have been formed. The Ancients would have erected magnificent temples in honor of events like this. And so in fact have we—but not of cold and lifeless marble. Our Temples of Concord, are the new states added and adding to the Union. Already they equal the OLD THIRTEEN in number, and will soon exceed them in population. Already the centre of American Power has crossed the Alleghany Ridge, and, while the Union endures, must be still moving westward. Already the soil which was originally given up for the sake of the Union, has become its great central support; and thus the prediction of Berkley, made with reference to the whole American continent, has been almost literally verified in the United States.

“Westward the Star of Empire takes its way,
The four first acts already past,
The fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time’s noblest offspring is her last.”

Meantime at the head of the NEW THIRTEEN, our own Ohio proudly stands; and the experience of the past justifies bright hopes of the future. Great she is already, but greater still “by the all-hail hereafter.” Her promises far exceed what she has yet performed; and refer us eagerly “to the coming on of time.” Looking forward as far as we now look backward, who shall fix limits to what Ohio may become, at the end of her first century? Few of us can hope then to be here; but our doings will then be matters of history. We are to prepare that future for another generation, though our eyes be not permitted to behold it. And we shall have lived to little purpose, if we do not carry our state onward in her thus far wonderful career. It was the proud boast of a Roman Emperor, that he found Rome brick, and left it marble. The fathers of Ohio did more. They left civilization, where they found barbarism—affluence, where they found penury—blooming gardens, where they found a cheerless waste—fair cities, where they found only wigwams—a palmy state, where they found only desolation. And if we would prove worthy sons of such worthy sires; if we would transmit the great legacy they have left us, not only unimpaired, but improved, no easy task is before us. Let us not be contented with merely preserving the materials of our past history; but remember, also, that we are to make materials for future history. Either for imitation or warning, for our glory or our shame, the example we set, will be recorded by our successors, who will compare what we leave, with what we found. And thrice happy will be our lot, if they, who may look back to us, as we have now looked back to our predecessors, shall be able to pronounce over us, that true, hearty, and emphatic WELL DONE, which the fathers of Ohio claim at our hands.

